

10/762186
U.S.S.N. 10/762,160

Specification Amendments

Please replace the paragraph 005 with the following rewritten paragraph:

005 The dual goals of preventing copper electro-migration and preventing cross-interconnect current leakage have not been adequately solved for several reasons. For example, porous silicon oxide based low-K dielectric insulating layers having an interconnecting porous structure have exhibited reduced adhesion to overlying layers, for example etch stop layers, and have increased the tendency of integrated circuit damascene features, such as copper interconnects, to exhibit increased current leakage and electro-migration of copper ions. For example, a phenomenon known as time dependent dielectric breakdown (TDDB) is believed to result from charge accumulation due to slow current leakage over time along micro-cracks in the low-K dielectric insulating layers and along cracks developed along poorly adhering material interfaces. As low-K materials become even more porous in an effort to achieve lower the dielectric constants, they have coincidentally become increasing mechanically weak, frequently resulting in micro-cracking and poor adhesion at material interfaces thereby increasing both current leakage and Cu electromigration. As a result, electrical

10762186
U.S.S.N. 10762,160

performance and device reliability of semiconductor devices is
compromised.